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ABSTRACT

This study examined state teacher licensure requirements and the extent to which there is reciprocity of these credentials across state lines. Receiving states often do not recognize out-of-state teacher licenses. True teacher license reciprocity is rare. For national leaders interested in facilitating the portability of teacher licenses, suggestions are offered to ensure that only qualified teachers are working in schools. Suggestions are also offered for creating incentives that will facilitate the recruitment and hiring of experienced teachers in communities where there is critical need and high demand. State strategies for addressing the issue of license reciprocity include: (1) recognize licenses awarded by other states; (2) cooperate with other states to adopt compatible standards for teacher preparation and licensure; (3) develop a comprehensive strategy to recruit and retain highly qualified teachers that includes license reciprocity; and (4) develop data systems that will help assess teacher quality and the effectiveness of teacher recruitment strategies and licensure policies. An appendix contains a chart showing state licensure recognition policies. (Contains 16 endnotes.) (SLD)

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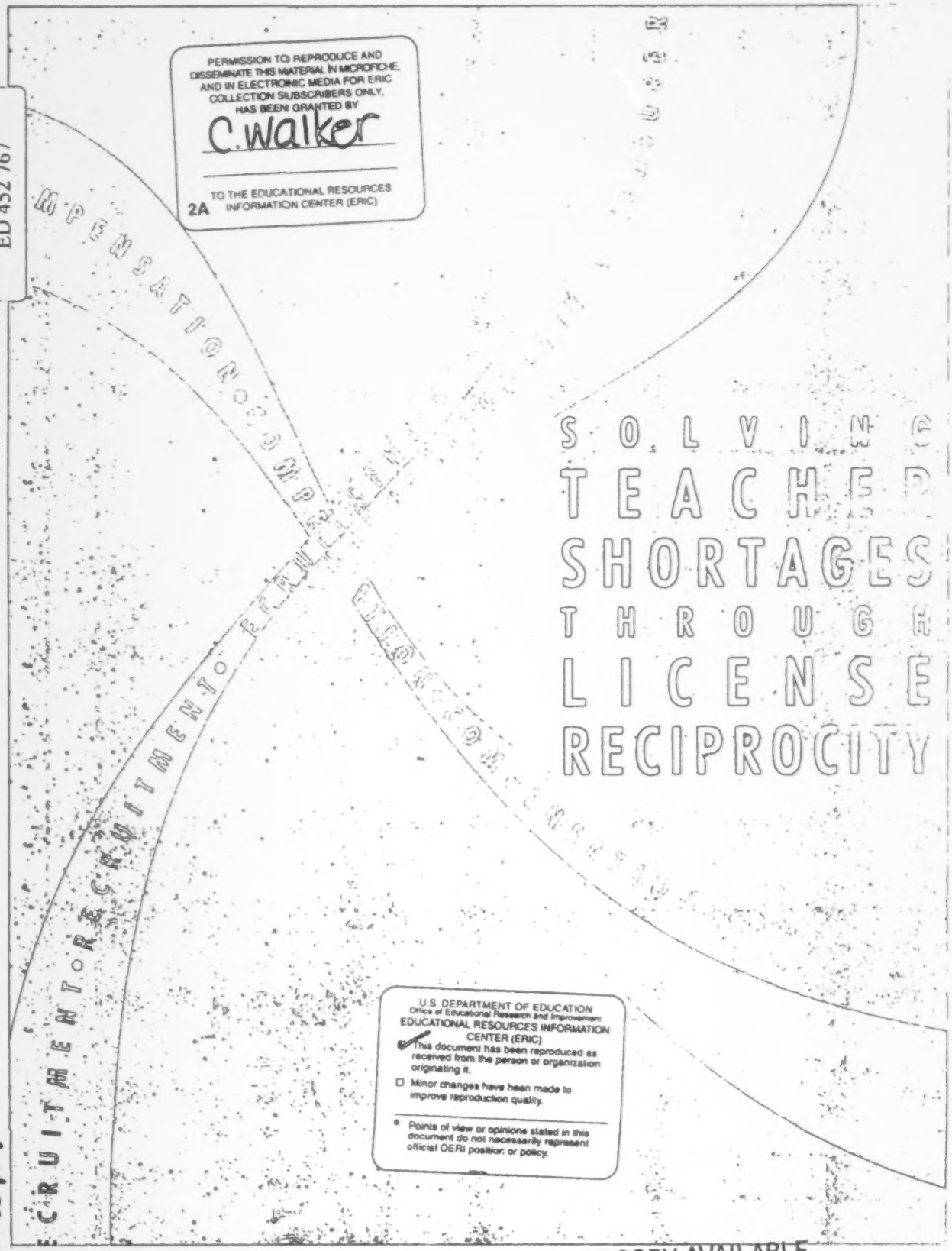

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The State Higher Education Executive Officers is a nonprofit, nationwide association of the chief executive officers serving statewide coordinating boards and governing boards of postsecondary education. The principal mission of SHEEO is to support continuing efforts to create and sustain excellent systems of higher education. SHEEO provides professional development opportunities for members and their senior staff, it facilitates the exchange and rapid dissemination of policy information among the states, and it conducts periodic studies and projects to promote effective policy development and implementation. Forty-nine states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico are members.

NCSL

The National Conference of State Legislatures serves the legislators and staffs of the nation's 50 states, its commonwealths, and territories. NCSL is a bipartisan organization with three objectives:

- To improve the quality and effectiveness of state legislatures,
- To foster interstate communication and cooperation,
- To ensure states a strong, cohesive voice in the federal system.

The Conference operates from offices in Denver, Colorado and Washington, D.C.

Since 1908, the governors have worked through the National Governors Association to deal collectively with issues of public policy and governance. The association's ongoing mission is to support the work of the governors by providing a bipartisan forum to help shape and implement national policy and to solve state problems.

The association works closely with the Administration and Congress on state-federal policy issues, serves as a vehicle for sharing knowledge of innovative programs among the states, and provides technical assistance and consultant services to governors on a wide range of management and policy issues.

The Center for Best Practices is a vehicle for sharing knowledge about innovative state activities, exploring the impact of federal initiatives on state government, and providing technical assistance to states. The Center works in a number of policy fields, including education.

SOLVING TEACHER SHORTAGES THROUGH LICENSE RECIPROCITY

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National Governors Association
Center for Best Practices

February 2001

A Report of the SHEEO Project

Enhancing the Teaching Profession: The Importance of Mobility to Recruitment and Retention

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This document is available electronically on the SHEEO web site at www.sheeo.org. Printed copies are available for $10, including postage, from the SHEEO office. The complete package of project documents, including three strategy briefs and a *Compendium of Resources on Teacher* Mobility, is available for $30.

SHEEO provides a 30 percent discount for orders of 10 or more of one publication. Orders must be prepaid or accompanied by a purchase order. Credit cards are not accepted

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FOREWORD

Recent research has demonstrated that student learning depends most of all on the knowledge and skills of classroom teachers. While national studies project a need for 2.2 million new teachers over the next 10 years, supply and demand data also show that the current distribution of teachers is uneven with critical shortages appearing in urban and rural districts and specific subject areas. In view of increased expectations for quality teachers and demands for more teachers, it is vitally important that public policies make teaching a more attractive profession. Every child in every school should have the opportunity to learn from a well-qualified teacher.

Despite the compelling nature of this situation, a review of established policies and countless anecdotes indicates that state and local employment and benefits policies often work against this priority. They restrict employment opportunities for experienced teachers and pose formidable barriers to new recruits.

Veteran teachers are discouraged from seeking teaching opportunities in other districts or states by the lack of reciprocity in licensing, restrictions on pension portability, and the unwillingness or inability of most districts to pay teachers for accrued experience. Such barriers create problems for experienced teachers whose families relocate or who wish to take advantage of market opportunities. As a result, many good teachers leave the profession prematurely. Similarly, many talented individuals are discouraged from considering teaching as a career. This applies both to college students preparing to start their careers and to the many skilled individuals looking for mid-career changes.

Enhancing the Teaching Profession: The Importance of Mobility to Recruitment and Retention, a two-year project sponsored by the State Higher Education Executive Officers (SHEEO) and funded by the Ford Foundation, seeks to promote the recruitment and retention of accomplished teachers by facilitating their mobility across districts and states. The project is based on the premise that the quality of the teaching profession will be enhanced by: (1) licensing policies that focus on capability, not locally idiosyncratic regulation, and (2) personnel policies that give teachers the freedom of movement enjoyed by other high-status professions. It has produced a series of publications that identify resources and analyze the policies and initiatives that affect employment opportunities for new and veteran teachers.

Resource Compendium

The ***Compendium of Resources on Teacher Mobility*** describes nearly 100 national, regional, and state resources, including data sources, initiatives, web sites, studies, and reports related to teacher mobility. The topics covered include: teacher supply and demand, compensation, hiring and recruitment, licensure requirements and credential reciprocity, pension portability, and general resources. The *Compendium* highlights the wealth of quality information available on each of these issues, but also sheds light on gaps between what studies suggest will make the profession more attractive and actual policies and practices at state and local levels. Co-published by SHEEO and the North Central Regional Education Laboratory (NCREL), the *Compendium* was developed by Alene Bycer Russell and Sandra S. Ruppert, with assistance from Rhetta Detrich.

Strategy Brief Series on Teacher Mobility

A strategy brief series was developed and co-published by SHEEO, the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL), and the National Governors Association (NGA). The briefs provide reviews of current state policies and initiatives in three areas: recruitment and hiring, license reciprocity, and pension portability. The three documents analyze states' interests and goals in achieving a high quality teacher workforce and identify specific strategies targeting these goals. These studies indicate that policies that enhance teacher mobility also help to keep good teachers in the profession and provide greater opportunities to recruit teachers to schools where they are in greatest need.

Teacher Recruitment: Staffing Classrooms with Quality Teachers by Eric Hirsch of the National Conference of State Legislatures identifies current strategies developed by states to recruit and hire quality teachers. The strategy brief describes innovative efforts to attract students and mid-career professionals to the teaching profession, as well as incentives to lure well-qualified and experienced teachers to hard-to-staff schools and subject areas where teachers are in short supply. The author offers several suggestions for strengthening the recruitment of high quality teachers, including better collection and analysis of teacher supply and demand data, integration of recruitment initiatives into comprehensive strategies to address teacher quality, and evaluation and modification of recruitment policies based on effective practices.

Solving Teacher Shortages through License Reciprocity by Bridget Curran, Camille Abrahams, and Theresa Clarke of the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices examines state teacher licensure requirements and the extent to which there is reciprocity of these credentials across state lines. For policymakers and education leaders interested in facilitating the portability of teacher licenses, the authors offer suggestions for ensuring that only qualified teachers are working in schools and for creating incentives that will facilitate the recruitment and hiring of experienced teachers in communities where there is critical need and high demand.

Improving Pension Portability for K-12 Teachers by Sandra S. Ruppert of Educational Systems Research provides an overview of key concepts related to pension portability. The study examines major types of pension plans, the current status of plans covering K-12 educators, and recent state actions to improve pension portability for teaching professionals. In addition to a glossary of terms, the brief offers suggestions to help state leaders ensure fair and open processes for modernizing retirement systems for a changing teacher workforce.

The resource compendium and the strategy briefs offer policymakers, researchers, and educators information and approaches to guide research and focus policy discussions on particular aspects of teacher mobility. Together, these documents provide a wide range of policy tools and options to enable state education leaders and policymakers to enhance the recruitment and retention of high quality teachers across the country. We hope they are helpful to your work and, on behalf of our organizations, we welcome opportunities to work with you to accomplish your goals.

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BACKGROUND

Concern about the quality of teachers in America has been growing steadily during the past several years because of the rising demand for highly qualified teachers and increased evidence that teacher quality affects student achievement. Strengthening teacher licensure requirements is one strategy state policymakers have used to influence the quality of the teaching force. However, at the same time states are increasing standards and requirements for teacher licenses, they also are aggressively recruiting large numbers of teachers to fill classrooms in high need areas. Variations in license standards and requirements have kept teachers who are licensed in one state from seeking licensure and employment in other states. Reciprocity of teacher licensure is one strategy that could help states meet their need for quality teachers.

The Demand for High Quality Teachers

The demand for teachers is not constant from region to region. There is an oversupply of teachers in some states and a critical shortage in others, particularly in certain subject specialty areas and in urban schools that enroll high percentages of low-income students. Some northern and midwestern states with declining student enrollment produce more teachers than they can employ, and many states produce more elementary school teachers than they need. Many southern and western states are experiencing rapid increases in student enrollments and cannot produce enough teachers.

Few states have concrete data showing which institutions or states provide them with the majority of their teachers or about the status of teacher supply and demand in their state. This lack of information is counterproductive at a time of increasing teacher shortages. Although most states are experiencing shortages of mathematics, science, and special education teachers, other states have critical shortages of teachers generally. Some states have an oversupply of teachers, particularly teachers of elementary school and teachers of secondary-school English and social studies who could fill vacancies in other states. Moreover, in most if not all states, significant numbers of former teachers are no longer teaching. Among them are teachers who moved to the state but never obtained a license or a teaching job because the requirements were too burdensome or redundant.

Teacher Licensure

A state license is required to teach in all public schools and many private schools. This license is designed to assure the public that those charged with educating children are competent to teach. Each state sets requirements and minimum standards for its prospective teachers. These standards are linked to the preparation educators receive in teacher education institutions. They often include completing courses in an approved teacher preparation program, receiving a degree from an accredited institution, passing examinations or assessments, and demonstrating ability in the classroom.

SUMMARY

State officials across the nation are seeking to improve teacher recruitment and licensure systems because of the vital need for more qualified teachers. However, challenges continue to arise when certified teachers move across state lines to fill teaching jobs. Although some states and national organizations have tried to facilitate interstate license reciprocity, these efforts do not go far enough. The reality is that receiving states often do not recognize out-of-state teacher licenses. True teacher license reciprocity – when a license earned in one state is fully recognized in another state – is rare. Teachers encountering obstacles in obtaining certification in their new states may leave the profession altogether, aggravating the nation's vital need for more highly qualified teachers.

Governors, legislators, and other state education leaders should take action to help qualified teachers fill jobs in states where they are needed. State strategies for addressing the issue of license reciprocity include the following:

- Recognize licenses awarded by other states.
- Cooperate with other states, regionally or nationwide, to adopt compatible standards for teacher preparation and licensure.
- Develop a comprehensive strategy to recruit and retain highly qualified teachers that includes license reciprocity.
- Develop data systems that will help assess teacher quality and the effectiveness of teacher recruitment strategies and licensure policies.

State licensing requirements have many common features. According to the 2000 manual of the National Association of State Directors of Teacher Education and Certification (NASDTEC), all states require new teachers to have obtained a bachelor's degree and to have completed some coursework in pedagogy and subject matter.[1] Many states set additional coursework requirements for license specialty areas, such as mathematics or special education, and for other areas, such as reading instruction and computer education. However, to the extent states set requirements relating to coursework, those requirements vary; no one course is required in all states.

States also vary in the assessments used to license teachers. Although many states use the same tests, many of the testing requirements differ. For example, more than 40 states require one or more of the following teacher assessments: basic skills, subject matter, general knowledge, knowledge of teaching, and teaching performance.[2] Of the 43 states that require testing, 35 use some combination of the three Praxis tests developed by the Educational Testing Service – the Praxis I Academic Skills Assessments, the Praxis II Subject Assessments, and the Praxis III Classroom Performance Assessments. States also impose ancillary requirements on teacher candidates, including proof of U.S. citizenship, an oath of allegiance, evidence of employment, a recommendation from a college or employer, a minimum age requirement, health requirements, and a requirement to study the U.S. Constitution. Finally, most states impose a licensing fee and screen applicants for good moral character.[3]

In many states, the state education agency or state board of education has the authority to license teachers and approve teacher preparation programs. In a growing number of states, a professional standards board composed of teachers and other officials has the authority to determine licensure requirements. Although the state or a regional accrediting association accredits teacher education institutions, there is considerable variance in their requirements, sparking increased interest in national accreditation by the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education. Forty-three states use the council's standards in addition to or in lieu of state or regional standards.[4]

License Reciprocity

The variation in teacher licensure requirements and accreditation processes impedes teacher mobility. Teachers, like all Americans, are becoming more mobile both within states and across states. For example, a recent study by the North Central Regional Education Laboratory found that, "one-third of new Minnesota licenses are issued to applicants from other states, and one-fifth to one-half of applicants for open teaching positions in Wisconsin districts are coming from other states (mostly in the Midwest)."[5] This and other studies indicate that teachers are crossing state lines within the region surrounding their home state to seek teaching jobs. However, the studies do not document the obstacles that they face to secure state licenses and find permanent positions.

True reciprocity ensures that a license earned in one state is fully recognized in another state. This does not mean a state simply eases entry by waiving certain requirements, providing alternative means to meet requirements, developing alternative routes to certification, or issuing emergency licenses. Teachers who receive licensure reciprocity in a state are deemed fully qualified teachers on the basis of a license earned in another state. Full reciprocity – whereby states recognize licenses from other states without requiring extra coursework or examinations – is the exception rather than the rule.

The complexity and variation of licensure requirements among states complicates reciprocity. Further confusing the issue, leaders in some states may establish more rigorous standards to improve teacher quality, while leaders in other states may relax the requirements to expand the teacher supply. Some states are reluctant to change their licensing systems for fear of compromising the quality or limiting the quantity of teachers. Yet completing a second set of requirements in a new state can be time consuming, costly, and redundant, especially for experienced teachers. Such burdensome requirements could discourage a teacher who has moved from one state to another from teaching or could delay a teacher's employment by as much as two or three years. At a time when many states are implementing incentives to attract teachers to shortage areas, the lack of reciprocity is counterproductive.

EFFORTS TO FACILITATE INTERSTATE RECIPROCITY

Several states and national organizations are seeking to develop model or common standards for initial licensure, advanced certification, and program accreditation and to facilitate greater licensure reciprocity. Though complicated by interstate variation and a lack of solid data on the impact of these initiatives, many education experts and policymakers remain committed to these activities.

Interstate Certification Contract

The most notable initiative to establish reciprocity is the interstate certification contract maintained by NASDTEC's Interstate Committee. Currently, 40 states, the District of Columbia, Guam, and Puerto Rico have signed the contract.[6] The contract's purpose is to assist teachers and other educators who move to another state by providing a vehicle to recognize training in state-approved programs, comparable licenses, and teaching experience. The contract facilitates reciprocity among the signatory states by establishing parameters under which states will license teachers prepared or licensed in other states. However, the interstate certification contract has some limitations and does not offer "true reciprocity." The agreements among states are based largely on recognizing preparation programs in other states and are conditional for most jurisdictions.

Teachers must still meet certain requirements before becoming certified in states other than the state that issued their initial licenses. Candidates typically must complete approved teaching programs and meet other state requirements, such as passing tests, achieving minimum grade point averages, or completing specific course requirements.[7] For example, Indiana offers a one-year reciprocal license to candidates prepared outside the state who hold a license comparable to an Indiana license. During that period, a candidate must complete the state's testing requirement to earn a standard license. Any candidate with less than two years of experience must also complete an internship program.

Another limitation of the interstate certification contract is that not every signatory state recognizes licenses from every other signatory state; each state determines comparability and reciprocity with the other participating states. For example, under the current NASDTEC contract, Illinois offers conditional reciprocity to teachers from 29 states and the District of Columbia. In contrast, Indiana has established NASDTEC reciprocity with 40 states (see Appendix).[8]

Regional Collaboration

Many states also are engaging in regional projects to address teacher issues and offer license reciprocity (see Appendix). Among these are three formal projects – the Northeast Common Market, the Midwest Regional Exchange, and the Mid-Atlantic Regional Teacher Project.

Northeast Common Market

Eight states in the northeastern region – Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, and Vermont – established a Northeast Common Market for educators in 1988. Using the NASDTEC interstate contract as a framework, the participating states developed a regional credential that allows teachers with an initial license in one state to teach in another state for up to two years before meeting the latter state's licensing requirements. Educators can receive a regional credential only once.

Midwest Regional Exchange

Nine Midwestern states – Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Missouri, Nebraska, Oklahoma, South Dakota and Wisconsin – have an exchange program that is similar to the Northeast Common Market. Teaching candidates or experienced teachers who complete a regionally accredited preparation program or hold a license from one of the participating states can obtain a two-year conditional license in any one of the other states. The agreement is based on the requirements for teacher preparation programs; candidates so licensed must still meet any additional grade point average, testing, coursework, or other requirements the receiving state demands to earn a regular license or certificate.

Mid-Atlantic Regional Teacher Project

In February 1999, the Council for Basic Education, the Maryland Department of Education, and the Mid-Atlantic Regional Educational Laboratory cosponsored a regional meeting that produced the Mid-Atlantic Regional Teacher Project (MARTP). The project establishes a regional partnership among Delaware, Maryland, Pennsylvania, and the District of Columbia to collectively address teacher supply and demand issues in the region. New Jersey's participation is pending. Virginia and West Virginia also have expressed an interest in participating in the project. MARTP will first conduct a gap analysis of the partners' teacher data systems to determine data availability and comparability in the region. The findings of the gap analysis will be used to develop common strategies for preparing, recruiting, hiring, and retaining new teachers and to facilitate greater license reciprocity in the region.

Collaboration through Other State and National Associations

During the past decade, states have increasingly engaged in collaborative efforts with other states and organizations to develop common or model standards and assessments for teacher licensure, certification, and preparation programs. These efforts do not establish reciprocity directly, but they may provide a foundation on which reciprocity policies could be based.

To develop model standards for initial licensure, many states are participating in the Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC). Two national organizations – the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) and the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) – have developed standards for advanced certification and program accreditation. These organizations' efforts could facilitate increased reciprocity among states by establishing common expectations for what teachers should know and be able to do in the classroom rather than what program requirements and coursework they should complete. The common knowledge and skill standards can assure state officials that a teacher licensed in another state has met essentially the same expectations as teachers with in-state licenses.

Increasingly, the organizations are focusing on aligning their standards and assessments across the functions of initial licensure, advanced certification, and program accreditation to create a continuum of complementary professional standards. They also have aligned their standards with national model content standards for students. To the extent that state standards for students are aligned with or based on national standards, states can have greater confidence that the national teacher standards complement student standards. However, these efforts face considerable challenges. Notably, the significant variation in state student standards complicates efforts to align teacher standards across states.

Initial Licensure

The Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium is a joint effort by 32 states to create model, performance-based, licensure standards for beginning teachers (see Appendix).[9] The standards include general teaching knowledge standards for all new teachers and standards for specific subject areas, such as elementary education, English language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, and special education. More than 20 states have adopted or adapted INTASC standards for licensing beginning teachers. Approximately 18 INTASC states also are cooperating to develop performance-based assessments for teaching knowledge, subject matter, and classroom performance based on the standards.

The adoption of common licensure standards for beginning teachers should afford states greater confidence in recognizing licenses issued by other states. That confidence should increase with the use of common aligned assessments that measure achievement of the standards. However, state assessment requirements vary considerably. Although most states require assessments for teacher licensure, the assessments – and the standards on which they are based – are often not compatible among states. Without compatibility, states have traditionally been reluctant to recognize credentials earned in other states. INTASC states are creating a framework for initial licensure that could facilitate license reciprocity, at least among the states that adopt and use the model standards and assessments to define and measure new teacher competencies.

To further promote the alignment of teacher preparation and licensure systems within and across states, INTASC launched a new project in 1999. Eight states – Maryland, Massachusetts, Nebraska, Ohio, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Vermont, and Wisconsin – are working with institutions of higher education to improve the quality of teacher preparation programs through the use of the INTASC model standards and assessments. Participants hope the project will increase the confidence states have in one another's preparation and licensure requirements.

Advanced Certification

The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards grew out of the 1986 report of the Carnegie Task Force on Teaching as a Profession. *A Nation Prepared: Teachers for the 21st Century* called for a national professional board to create standards for accomplished teaching. The national board has set standards and offers advanced certification in more than 30 fields.

According to information from NBPTS and from a NASDTEC state survey, 33 states automatically grant licenses to out-of-state teachers with national board certification (see Appendix).[10] States still vary in the type of license they issue and, in some states, teachers must meet additional requirements before they can earn a standard or advanced state license. At least seven states bestow the highest-level teacher license the state offers to

teachers – from in or out of state – who are nationally certified; others bestow an initial license and require those teachers to meet additional requirements to earn an advanced license or to renew their license.

As of November 30, 2000, nearly 9,500 teachers from all 50 states and the District of Columbia have attained certification from the national board. As states increasingly evaluate the rigor of national certification relative to state standards and decide to recognize national certification, they are likely to develop incentives to increase the number of nationally certified teachers in the state. Many states also recognize in-state teachers who earn national certification with automatic license renewal or salary bonuses. Such added incentives could increase the interest and mobility of out-of-state teachers.

States are increasingly recognizing national board certification and are providing incentives to teachers to pursue and earn this certification. Some states are offering automatic licensure to out-of state teachers who are nationally certified. For example, during the 2000 legislative session, Virginia lawmakers enacted legislation waiving state licensure requirements for nationally certified out-of-state teachers. New legislation in South Carolina also exempts teachers with national board certification from initial certification requirements and makes state recertification requirements for these teachers consistent with the national board's recertification requirements.

Assessment

The Educational Testing Service's (ETS) Teaching and Learning Division is developing and administering several assessments related to teacher licensure. Foremost among these are the Praxis tests for new teachers – the Praxis I Academic Skills Assessments, which is intended for use as a requirement for program entry; the Praxis II Subject Assessments, which is a collection of 140 subject-matter tests that are intended as a requirement for program completion and an initial license; and the Praxis III Classroom Performance Assessments for first-year teachers, which is intended as a requirement for a second-stage or continuing license. According to ETS, of the 43 states that require tests as part of the licensure process, 35 require candidates to pass some combination of the Praxis I, II, and III assessments.

In addition to the Praxis tests, ETS is working with INTASC and several of its member states to develop and pilot a test of teaching knowledge for new teachers. ETS also works closely with the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards to develop and score the national board assessments, which include a teacher-developed portfolio and a written assessment of content knowledge and content-specific pedagogical knowledge.

The overlap and alignment of these various assessments could facilitate common licensing standards and thus reciprocity across states. However, significant differences in state standards and requirements remain. For example, although 35 states use some combination of the Praxis tests, the

combinations vary widely. In addition, each state sets its own cut-off score for passing each test and those cut-off scores vary greatly. Other states have developed their own licensure assessments based on state standards for teacher knowledge and skills.

Program Accreditation

Common accreditation standards or requirements could make it easier for states to recognize teacher preparation programs in other states, if not the license teachers earn at program completion. The National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education is a coalition of 33 professional education organizations, including the two major teachers' unions and many of the subject-matter teacher groups.

NCATE has established partnerships with 45 states and the District of Columbia to conduct joint reviews of colleges of education (see Appendix).[11] The partnerships are configured in a variety of ways to integrate state and national standards and to meet different state requirements. Four states – Alaska, Arkansas, Maryland, and North Carolina – require public and private teacher education institutions to be accredited by NCATE. Four additional states – Georgia, Mississippi, South Carolina, and West Virginia – require NCATE accreditation only for public teacher education institutions. Kentucky requires its teacher education institutions to meet NCATE standards but does not require NCATE accreditation. The other partner states use the NCATE standards and review process in different ways in conjunction with state standards and requirements to approve or evaluate teacher education programs in their states.

To upgrade the rigor of its accreditation standards and focus the process on institutional and program results, NCATE recently developed new performance-based accreditation standards that will be phased into use for program review during the next five-year accreditation cycle. By 2005, all NCATE-accredited institutions will be accredited under the new standards. The new results-based standards require institutions to demonstrate that teaching candidates know their subject matter and can teach it effectively. The new standards bring NCATE accreditation into greater alignment with INTASC and NBPTS efforts to develop performance-based standards for initial licensure and advanced certification.

STATE ACTION

To increase their pool of qualified teachers, some states are easing or waiving requirements for teachers with out-of-state licenses. However, most states still do not recognize out-of-state licenses unconditionally. Some states are reducing coursework requirements, allowing teachers to opt out of coursework by passing tests, or extending the period during which they can complete the requirements. Many states, including Arkansas,

California, Colorado, and Missouri, have eased requirements for out-of-state teachers without granting full reciprocity. In contrast, lawmakers in Florida and Mississippi have passed legislation granting full reciprocity to experienced teachers, and the North Carolina State Board of Education is considering similar action.

- In August 2000, the Arkansas State Board of Education temporarily eased licensure requirements to allow those applying for provisional licenses or alternative licenses to begin teaching immediately. The regulations, in effect for 120 days, will help address shortages in certain areas by allowing superintendents to hire teachers before they have taken and passed the required exams. These teachers must take and pass the exams during the school year. Candidates eligible for a one-year provisional license include those who may have earned teacher licenses in other states but who lack coursework or other specific qualifications for an Arkansas license.
- In 1997, California enacted the Credentialed Out-of-State Teacher Recruitment and Retention Act, which authorized school districts to employ any teacher holding a valid elementary, secondary, or special education credential from a state other than California. The legislation also authorized the state credentialing commission to issue such teachers a five-year preliminary credential. During the five-year term, a teacher must complete the requirements for a standard professional credential, including passing the state certification test and completing coursework requirements for subject-matter competence, methods of teaching reading, the U.S. Constitution, health education, special education, and computer education.
- Colorado enacted legislation in 1999 that allows the state department of education to issue a provisional teacher license to any applicant from another state or country whose qualifications meet or exceed the state's standards for the issuance of a provisional license. An applicant with three or more years of experience in a state that "has reciprocity" can be issued a provisional license without having to demonstrate professional competencies if the applicant has met all other requirements for a provisional or professional license and is qualified to teach in that state. A provisional license is good for three years and can be renewed if the licensee demonstrates good cause for failure to complete the requirements of a professional license. To earn a standard professional license, a provisionally licensed teacher must complete a local teacher induction program. However, additional legislation, signed by Governor Bill Owens in 2000, allows teachers with comparable licenses from other states to receive professional licenses without holding a provisional license, completing an induction program, or demonstrating professional competencies otherwise required for a professional license.

- In 1998, Missouri lawmakers passed a bill creating a provisional teaching certificate for out-of-state teachers. Under subsequent state board of education regulations implemented in April 1999, a candidate who holds a valid license from another state is eligible for a Missouri certificate if the candidate graduated from a state-approved institution, meets Missouri's testing standards, and meets other basic requirements for prospective teachers. The state board of education approved further revisions in 2000 that allow out-of-state teachers to demonstrate subject-matter knowledge by passing tests as an alternative to completing required coursework, which can be costly and time-consuming.
- Florida lawmakers passed legislation in 2000 that authorizes the state to provide full license reciprocity to out-of-state teachers who have standard certificates and two years of teaching experience in another state without placing additional requirements on a candidate. This legislation recognizes licenses from all states and makes those licenses portable to Florida.
- In 1997, Mississippi lawmakers passed legislation that authorizes the state to issue a standard license to anyone who holds a valid standard license from another state and has a minimum of two years of full-time teaching or administrative experience without assessment or other conditions. Educators with less than a standard license from another state or less than two years of full-time experience receive a nonrenewable special license for no more than 24 months, during which time the applicant is required to complete Mississippi's requirements for a standard license. The legislation recognizes licenses from all states regardless of the route – traditional or alternate – the educator took to obtain the license.

NEXT STEPS FOR STATE POLICYMAKERS AND EDUCATION LEADERS

In many cases, state policies designed for different objectives may be working at cross-purposes. To improve teacher quality, states have increased requirements and raised standards for teacher certification. At the same time, to ease teacher shortages, states and districts increasingly offer financial and professional incentives to entice teachers from other states to seek teaching positions in new states. Teachers wanting to take advantage of new incentives are caught in a dilemma – the lack of license reciprocity poses a significant barrier to their mobility. Given the current status of teacher supply and demand across the nation, the conflicting policies are counterproductive. States have a vested interest in expanding license portability, thereby enhancing teacher mobility.

Recognize licenses awarded by other states

State policymakers and education leaders need to encourage greater reciprocity to maximize license portability and to entice new teachers from other states to fill their vacant positions. This could include legislation, such as that passed in Florida and Mississippi, that awards licenses to teachers from other states with a valid license and two years of experience. A state could also choose to award a license to a teacher with no experience but who holds a license from another state, or it could choose to identify states with similar or more rigorous requirements and choose to recognize licenses from those states.

While most states license out-of-state teachers with national board certification, they diverge on the type of license granted or impose additional requirements. As states increasingly recognize in-state teachers who earn national certification, they also could extend that recognition to out-of-state applicants.

- **Recognize the licenses awarded by other states.**
- **Cooperate with other states, regionally or nationwide, to adopt compatible standards for teacher preparation and licensure.**
- **Develop a comprehensive strategy to recruit and retain highly qualified teachers that includes license reciprocity.**
- **Develop data systems that will help assess teacher quality and the effectiveness of teacher recruitment strategies and licensure policies.**

Cooperate in multistate efforts

State policymakers and education leaders can also consider participating in joint efforts to establish common teacher standards, assessments, and program approval measures. States can join existing efforts, such as INTASC; adopt measures that recognize national certification; and adopt program approval standards that NCATE has developed or that align with NCATE's new performance-based standards. Some regional efforts offer promise, but so far the regional initiatives mostly offer conditional or limited licenses that can be upgraded to permanent or standard licenses only upon completion of further requirements.

To address nationwide interstate reciprocity, states might also want to convene top policymakers and education leaders who can substantially change state standards and requirements for teacher licensure and certification. Such a meeting would engage participants in a discussion about the need for reciprocity, existing structures and measures that can facilitate it, and the remaining barriers. True reciprocity will require significant action on the part of many, if not all, states. Yet before policymakers can take action, they may need to develop a better understanding of the issues and concerns from a multistate perspective. Ultimately, states should not have to lower their standards and expectations, but they will need to give up some degree of state distinction in favor of compatible standards and requirements.

Multistate action is not required to increase license mobility; states can act independently. Two states have already taken action to recognize licenses awarded by all other states with no greater condition than two years of teaching experience, and a third state is considering such action. The two

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states do not ask other states to accept the licenses they award, and they did not analyze or compare requirements or standards. States such as Florida and Mississippi may have given themselves a competitive edge by acting first and not demanding reciprocal recognition. As individual states take these actions, particularly as part of a package of incentives, other states may lose opportunities to attract teachers.

Develop comprehensive strategies

Given the current demand for skilled teachers and the data on teacher attrition, policymakers should consider measures that facilitate license reciprocity as part of a comprehensive strategy to attract, retain, and support highly qualified teachers and school leaders. Efforts to improve license reciprocity may be ineffective without policies that address adequate pay, working conditions, unique needs of new teachers, leadership, professional development, and other factors that influence and affect teacher retention and quality.

Employ data for policy evaluation

Notwithstanding some efforts to facilitate reciprocity, states know little about their need for it, teachers' interests in it, or its impact on supply and demand. Because few states collect and analyze data on teacher qualifications or hiring patterns, there is a dearth of information on the desired or actual mobility of teachers across state lines. Further, despite ongoing efforts to maintain the interstate certification contract, states do not know how much mobility the contract produces.

Consequently, state policymakers may want to evaluate the data collection and analysis capability in their state and take steps to improve it. An effective data system would collect and analyze information useful to policymakers, education officials, educators, and parents, including information on teacher supply and demand, qualifications, mobility, retention and attrition, and hiring and job placement. To maximize its usefulness, teacher data should link easily with information on teacher preparation programs and student performance. Armed with accurate data, policymakers can make better decisions about recruitment needs and licensure policies and can determine whether license reciprocity may be a useful strategy.

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CONCLUSION

True license reciprocity is an important piece of any comprehensive strategy to address teacher supply and demand concerns, and it offers multiple benefits. It can aid districts and schools in their recruitment of well-qualified teachers. It can help teachers move across states and allow them to direct their skills and expertise to communities where they are in greatest demand. Most importantly, it will help give students greater access to accomplished educators who are committed to their profession.

APPENDIX

State Policies and Initiatives for Teacher License Reciprocity

State	Has NASDTEC Contract with States (# of States)[12]	Participates in Regional Reciprocity Agreement or Project[13]	Participates in INTASC[14]	Grants License to National Board-Certified Teachers[15]	Engaged in Partnership with NCATE[16]
Alabama	40		X	X	
Alaska				X	X*
Arizona	37			X	
Arkansas	38		X	X	X*
California	39		X	X	X
Colorado	35			X	
Connecticut	38	X	X		X
Delaware	36	X	X	X	X
Florida	38			X	X
Georgia	39		X	X	X**
Hawaii	39		X		X
Idaho	39				X
Illinois	29	X	X		X
Indiana	40		X		X
Iowa		X	X	X	X
Kansas			X	X	X
Kentucky	34		X	X	X†
Louisiana	33		X		X
Maine	39	X	X		X
Maryland	40	X	X		X*
Massachusetts	40	X	X	X	X
Michigan	39	X		X	X
Minnesota			X	X	X
Mississippi	35				X**
Missouri		X	X	X	

Notes: * State requires all institutions to be NCATE accredited.
** State requires only public institutions to be NCATE accredited.
† State requires all institutions to meet NCATE standards, but does not require them to be NCATE accredited.

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APPENDIX (cont)

State Policies and Initiatives for Teacher License Reciprocity

State	Has NASDTEC Contract with States (# of States)[12]	Participates in Regional Reciprocity Agreement or Project[13]	Participates in INTASC[14]	Grants License to National Board-Certified Teachers[15]	Engaged in Partnership with NCATE[16]
Montana	38			X	X
Nebraska		X	X		X
Nevada	36			X	X
New Hampshire	40	X			
New Jersey	31	X			
New Mexico	33			X	X
New York	39	X	X	X	X
North Carolina	36		X	X	X c
North Dakota					X
Ohio	37		X		X
Oklahoma	38	X	X	X	X
Oregon	38			X	X
Pennsylvania	40	X		X	X
Rhode Island	40	X	X	X	X
South Carolina	40		X	X	X ∞
South Dakota		X	X	X	X
Tennessee	40		X	X	X
Texas	37		X		X
Utah	35			X	X
Vermont	37	X	X		
Virginia	39		X	X	X
Washington	39		X	X	X
West Virginia	38				X ∞
Wisconsin		X	X	X	X
Wyoming	20			X	X

Notes: * State requires all institutions to be NCATE accredited.
** State requires only public institutions to be NCATE accredited.
† State requires all institutions to meet NCATE standards, but does not require them to be NCATE accredited.

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ENDNOTES

[1] National Association of State Directors of Teacher Education and Certification, *The NASDTEC Manual on the Preparation and Certification of Education Personnel: Fifth Edition, 2000–01* (Dubuque, Iowa: Kendall/Hunt Publishing Company, 2000), B-4–5.

[2] Ibid, B-6.

[3] Ibid, B-7.

[4] National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education, "State/NCATE Partnership Frameworks" (2000), at http://www.ncate.org/partners/chart2.pdf.

[5] Debra Hare et al., *Teacher Shortages in the Midwest: Current Trends and Future Issues* (Oak Brook, IL: North Central Regional Educational Laboratory, 2000), 5.

[6] Supra Note 1, H-1.

[7] Ibid, ix and H-1.

[8] Ibid, H-6.

[9] Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium, telephone conversation with organizational staff, August 2000.

[10] National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, telephone conversation with organizational staff, August 2, 2000; and National Association of State Directors of Teacher Education and Certification, "NASDTEC's Report on How the States Respond to NBPTS-Certified Teachers" (August 2000), at http://www.nasdtec.org/papers/NBPTS_Report.rtf.

[11] Supra Note 4.

[12] Supra Note 1, H-2–17.

[13] This column is based on information gathered from each of three regional projects – the Northeast Common Market, Midwest Regional Exchange, and Mid-Atlantic Regional Teacher Project – and may not be an exhaustive list.

[14] Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium, telephone conversation with organizational staff, August 2000.

[15] Supra Note 10.

[16] Supra Note 4.

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